

Information for and Collaboration with Other Services Providers

ABA therapists, SLPS, OTs, and other service providers share many of the same goals and sometimes even use similar techniques! Let's work together to help our clients make huge strides!

What IS Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?

In a nutshell, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) changes things in the environment in order to change behavior. ABA focuses on improving behaviors, such as social skills, communication, daily living skills, and challenging behaviors. Conceptually, it is based on principles of learning that have shown that a behavior that leads to a reward (or in ABA terms, a “reinforcer”) is more likely to be repeated, whereas a behavior that leads to something unpleasant (in ABA terms, a “punisher”) is less likely to be repeated in the future. As a therapy, ABA is an evidence-based practice that uses procedures to learn and improve skills and decrease challenging behaviors that prevent or compete with navigating daily life.

ABA therapy monitors behavior change in a systematic way and uses data-based decision making so that we can see how well the therapy is working. ABA has been shown to help children with autism develop needed skills and new ways to respond to challenges, whatever the age or how impacted their skills are. Its effectiveness is backed by hundreds of studies and it has been endorsed by the U. S. Surgeon General as an effective treatment for autism.

ABA can be misconstrued as a therapy in which an emotionless therapist teaches rigid, rote skills through flash cards while seated at table or one in which a child is allowed to tantrum until they “give in.” At Green Box ABA, we believe that for meaningful changes to occur, a child in ABA therapy should be happy, relaxed, and engaged and that means therapy that respects the child’s strengths and interests and takes place in more natural ways.

WHs of Successful Collaboration

Specialized needs require specialized care. While there are often overlaps, each specialty area makes unique contributions to care. Maximizing a child’s potential requires respect for and integration of those unique contributions. Coordination of care among providers creates the most clinically effective, timely and cost-effective outcomes.

Why?

- To make sure that we are not working “against” each other or approaching a need in contradictory ways
- Because a change in one therapy can affect response to other therapies (for example, the effects of prescribing medication for ADHD symptoms)
- Because response/effectiveness to one therapy can affect response to other therapies
- Because we have strategies and information, specific to a child, that can help each other. For example,
 - The pediatrician may be aware of medical causes for incontinence
 - OT may be aware of sensory sensitivities that make a child more likely to meltdown
 - SLP may know the most appropriate developmental level for instructions or have precisely identified the child’s social pragmatic deficits
 - ABA may have determined the intent or function of a challenging behavior and then developed a plan to respond in a way that reinforces new behaviors and provides replacement skills for challenging behaviors that are seen in many different (including therapy) settings.
- To more accurately assess progress by sharing data and assessment results
- Because working together is an excellent way to build understanding of and respect for other treatments

Who?

At Green Box ABA, we welcome the opportunity to collaborate with other **evidence-based providers**, such as Occupation Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech-Language Pathologists, Psychologists, Pediatricians & Developmental Pediatricians, and Clinical Social Workers.

ABA services are provided by professionals at different levels of training and expertise. ABA professionals are:

- **BCBA** (Board Certified Behavior Analyst): holds a master's degree with specialized coursework in applied behavior analysis, has completed supervised fieldwork, passed a certification exam, and is licensed by the Virginia Board of Medicine
- **BCBA-D** (Board Certified Behavior Analyst-Doctoral) holds a doctoral degree with specialized coursework in ABA and an ABA-focused doctoral dissertation, has completed supervised fieldwork, passed a certification exam, and is licensed by the Virginia Board of Medicine
- **BCaBA** (Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst) holds a bachelor's degree with specialized coursework in applied behavior analysis has completed supervised fieldwork, passed a certification exam, and is licensed by the Virginia Board of Medicine. The BCaBA works under supervision of a BCBA or BCBA-D
- **RBT** (Registered Behavior Technician) has no advanced degree requirement but does required demonstrated competency in practice and a certification exam. The RBT works only under supervision of a certified behavior analyst.

Only certified behavior analysts (BCBA, BCBA-D, BCaBA) have case management and supervision responsibilities and collaborative activities should involve these professionals.

What?

Appropriate documents and information to share and discuss include, but are not limited to:

- Treatment goals
- Treatment progress
- Safety plans
- Response to medicine or medicine changes
- Other pertinent observations related to intervention effectiveness and strategies

Where?

- While in-person meetings or observations of therapeutic sessions can be useful, HIPAA regulations and insurance payor restrictions can be prohibitive. For example, many insurance companies prohibit service provision by two specialties at the same time. However, we are happy to discuss potential observation of therapeutic sessions.
- Other options include phone calls, video (e.g., zoom) calls, and HIPAA-compliant email exchanges. Sharing of documents (treatment plans and so forth) allows review and follow-up "in person" (e.g., by phone) if needed.

When?

- The best time to start collaboration is now!
- Documents and other information can be shared at the beginning of services and whenever updates are made
- When there are new developments in behavior or when there is no/limited treatment progress

And How?

The Behavior Analyst working with _____ is _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Green Box ABA requires patient release of medical records and information prior to initiation of collaboration.